

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

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FOLL REPEAT BAMAKO 4011 ACTION SECSTATE INFO OUAGADOUGOU
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TAGS: PBOR, ML, UV

SUBJ: MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 2358

1. AS A RESULT OF LONGSTANDING BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN
MALI AND UPPER VOLTA, GOM HAS MOVED TROOPS FROM SEGOU
(4TH REGION) TO MOPTI (5TH REGION), ADJACENT TO DISPUTED
AREA. FIFTEEN ARMY TRUCKS FILLED WITH POLICE, GENDARMERIE
AND ARMY TROOPS AND 15 TO 20 ARMY TANKS WERE SEEN ON
SUNDAY EVENING MOVING OUT OF BAMAKO AREA IN DIRECTION
OF SEGOU. FIVE TRUCKS OF FOOD WERE SENT TO DISPUTED
AREA ON SATURDAY, NOV 16.

2. TROOP BUILDUP IN DISPUTED AREA OF COURSE INCREASES
RISK OF INCIDENTS OR PREMATURE CONFRONTATION BEFORE BOTH
PRESIDENTS OR OAU HAVE HAD CHANCE TO RESOLVE PROBLEM.

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3. PRESENT BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN MALI AND UPPER VOLTA IS NOTHING NEW TO EITHER SIDE. ON NOV 10, L'ESSOR, THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF MALI'S MILITARY REGIME STATED THAT BORDER CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN A YEARLY EVENT FOR THE PAST 13 YEARS. WHILE EXPERTS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE MET OVER A DOZEN TIMES IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE, ALL ATTEMPTS TO REACH AN AGREEMENT BASED ON PRE-INDEPENDENCE DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN FRUITLESS.

4. THE BORDER DIVIDING MALI AND UPPER VOLTA CONSIST OF 1,150 KILOMETERS. OF THIS, ONLY 160 KMS LOCATED IN THE NORTHEASTERN AREA OF MALI NEAR HOMBORI ARE IN DISPUTE. THE DISPUTED AREA IS MORE OR LESS IN THE CENTER OF THE RICH AND FERTILE LIPTAKO-GOURMA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, AND INCLUDES THE BELI RIVER WHICH BOTH MALI AND UPPER VOLTA CLAIM.

5. FOR YEARS HERDSMEN FROM BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE USED THE AREA FOR GRAZING DURING THE DRY SEASON. THE PROBLEM HAS DOUBTLESS BEEN EXACERBATED BY RUMORS OF THE PRESENCE OF OIL, MANGANESE, AND TITANIUM DEPOSITS.
MCGUIRE

UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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